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17 April 1959

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN



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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE BULLETIN

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DAILY BRIEF

I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

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*Khrushchev: (Khrushchev fainted at a reception in East Berlin on 10 March, [redacted])

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[redacted] Khrushchev was said to be pale and trembling as he left the building some time later. [redacted]

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[redacted] six days earlier, in Leipzig, Khrushchev looked "old, sick, and had a very pale complexion," [redacted] his chin trembled constantly when he was not talking. Khrushchev, 5 feet 5 inches tall and weighing 220 pounds, is 65 years old today, 17 April. He apparently has a chronic kidney ailment, but is not known to have had fainting spells in the past. Khrushchev has been on vacation since about 25 March. [redacted]

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USSR: Khrushchev appears to be carrying his quiet shake-up of Soviet officialdom into the highest levels of the party. TASS has announced that N. G. Ignatov, a member of both the party presidium and secretariat, has been given an inconsequential job in the Russian Republic, probably signifying the eclipse of his high party career. The Ignatov shift follows closely behind the demotion of several second-echelon officials including I. I. Kuzmin, Soviet planning boss. [redacted]

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East Germany - Berlin: Speaking to the East German parliament on 16 April, Premier Grotewohl categorically rejected any solution of the Berlin problem which would include East Berlin in a free city under international control. Acceptance of such proposals, he said, would violate the sovereignty of the GDR. Grotewohl emphasized that a German peace treaty is more important than reunification, but suggested that negotiations between the two German states prior to the foreign

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ministers' conference could pave the way for a confederation which might sign a peace treaty. Grotewohl set the level of East German participation in the foreign ministers' conference with the announcement that Foreign Minister Bolz will be the East German regime's "representative."

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USSR propaganda: A recent burst of propaganda in the USSR on US economic problems is related, in the opinion of the American Embassy in Moscow, to Soviet concern over the potential impact of the American exhibition scheduled to be held in Moscow this summer. The embassy expects, beside the usual effort to discredit the capitalist system, a growing volume of propaganda designed to convince the Soviet citizen that what he will see at the exhibition are the fruits enjoyed by the favored few at the expense of the exploited American worker.

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DAILY BRIEF

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III. THE WEST

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m0 Britain-Iraq: (Britain is increasingly concerned over the growth of Communist influence in Iraq as well as over the harassment of the Iraq Petroleum Company. London is re-examining its decision to sell Iraq large quantities of heavy arms, to be delivered in mid-1960.)

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m0 France: (A Foreign Ministry official now says that De Gaulle wants global French-British-American cooperation to go beyond consultation and include fixed decisions even on specific questions of strategy. He also wants a division of geographic areas of responsibility--with Africa going to France. This statement suggests that Paris will soon renew its demand for blanket endorsement of France's North African policies.)

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I. THE COMMUNIST BLOC

Top Soviet Leader Apparently Demoted

The shake-up of Soviet party and government officials which has been proceeding quietly for several months appears now to be reaching into the top levels of the party. The announcement on 16 April that Nikolay Ignatov, a member of both the party presidium and secretariat, has been appointed chairman of the presidium of the Russian Republic's Supreme Soviet, probably signals a sharp political decline for him. The post, which makes Ignatov titular president of one of the USSR's 15 republics, is largely ceremonial and without political significance. It was previously occupied by low-ranking Mikhail Tarasov.

Ignatov, now 58, has been at or near the top of the party hierarchy for many years. He was brought into the presidium from a leading provincial party post in June 1957, following the removal of the "antiparty group," and became a party secretary in December 1957. Although he has remained relatively inconspicuous, there are indications that he has had some responsibilities in agriculture. He still retains his party posts, but removal from them may follow.

Since last December, a number of second-ranking figures have lost their jobs. These include party and government leaders in the Turkmen, Uzbek, and Belorussian Republics, and Moscow Oblast, as well as Soviet planning chief I. I. Kuzmin. Although not completely similar in detail, all of these cases are apparently part of a drive, lead by Khrushchev, to replace inefficient or corrupt leaders without respect to issues of political loyalty.

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Kuwait to Reorganize Armed Forces

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(A reorganization and consolidation of Kuwait's military units is scheduled to take place about 1 May. It appears motivated principally by the growing internal and external threat from Iraq, and should materially improve the effectiveness and control of Kuwait's forces.)

(These forces at present consist of three separate entities --a 1,000-man state police, 1,200-man public security force, and a 1,000-man frontier force--with little or no effective coordination among them. The reorganization will create a 1,500-man army from the old frontier force augmented by 500 personnel from the public security force. The army will consist of three battalion-size units, partly mobile and equipped with light armored vehicles. The remainder of the public security force will be united with the police into a force of about 1,700 men. One member of the ruling Subah family will be given a post in each major unit in an attempt to assure its loyalty to the ruler. Sheik Abdulla Mubarak, the deputy ruler, will remain in control of all the forces.)

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In a statement to the press on 13 April, UAR Minister of State Kamal Rifat, who directs clandestine activities, declared that the UAR would stand by the "Kuwaiti people" if Iraq's leaders were "foolhardy enough" to invade Kuwait.

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III. THE WEST

Paris Wants Tripartite Areas of Responsibility

(French President de Gaulle's objective in pressing for French-British-American discussions on global policy is described by a Foreign Ministry official as "not consultation, but decisions." The official said De Gaulle wants the three powers to agree on a joint strategy to be followed in specific situations and also wants a division of geographic areas of responsibility in which "France would be responsible for Africa.")

(Several months ago the French position was presented as involving common decisions on matters of world-wide importance through the process of organized consultation. Later French statements, such as that made to General Norstad by Chief of Staff General Ely in March, centered more on the desirability of the three powers' making national interests and policies known so as to enable them to refrain from acting against each other.)

(The views now attributed to De Gaulle, however, suggest that Paris may next demand a blanket US-British advance endorsement of and support for its policies in Africa, particularly North Africa, as regards both objectives and implementation.)

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